The Sketch

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"GOD FOR HARRY! ENGLAND! AND SAINT GEORGE!"

LAURENCE OLIVIER *plays the King in Shakespeare's "King Henry V.", produced by Two Cities Films in Technicolor. The few alterations in the text are minute and verbal, and the cuts even less frequent than those made in stage productions. The shooting took place in and around the Anglo-Norman castle at Powerscourt, Eire, specially chosen by Olivier as a suitable background.* [PHOTOGRAPH BY WILFRID NEWTON.]

A

MOTLEY NOTES.

By ALAN KEMP.

Smash and Grab. If we are not a law-abiding people, it is not through lack of telling everybody that we are. But human nature was ever contradictory, and there are some respects in which we seem to be incorrigibly lawless. Neither appeals nor threats can induce us to be tidy; apparently we love litter and think the landscape improved by sardine-tins, beer bottles and banana skins. We are such individualists that if a man puts up a fence or the most conciliatory form of notice to mark the boundary between common land and private property, it will almost certainly be torn down. The young of our race are quite the most destructive on earth. The passion, so highly developed in our schoolboys and undergraduates, for indicating pleasure or excitement by smashing something is, as far as I know, peculiar to English youth and would not be understood in any other part of the world. Nor, perhaps, would the ambition of every spirited British youth to possess a policeman's helmet.

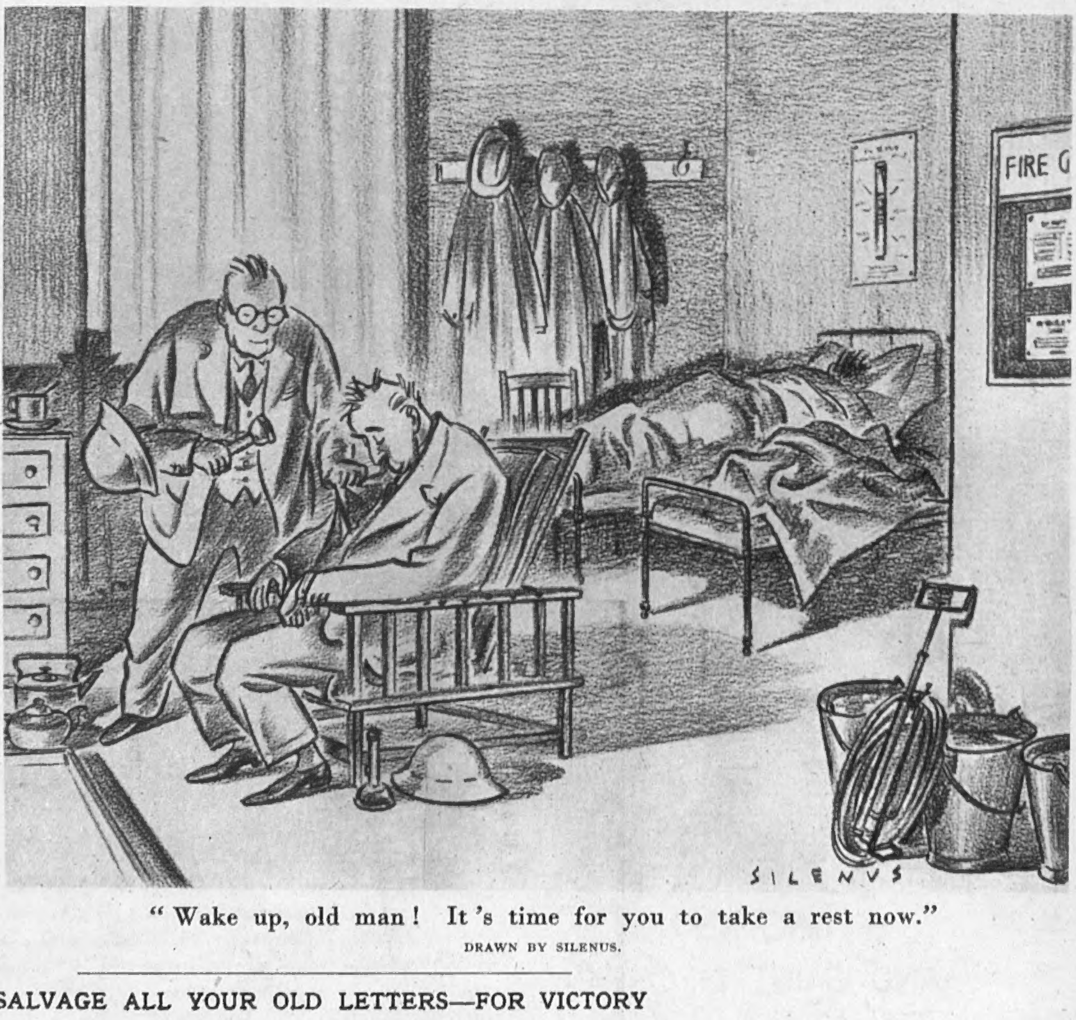
"The news is certainly much better these days, dear."

DRAWN BY JOHN G. WALTER.

Flotsam and Jetsam. I dare say there is some profound psychological reason for these national characteristics, but it would take a very ingenious psychologist to explain the present national pastime of dumping foreign bodies in static water-tanks. We might expect a few bottles, jam-tins and even dead cats; but it needs a considerable and a concerted effort to heave into the vasty deep garden-rollers, bedsteads, perambulators, kitchen-stoves, Bren guns, hearses and Anderson shelters. The only thing lacking seems to be a full-grown Churchill tank, and I dare say that will be added to the collection one of these days, for the quantity and variety of the bric-à-brac seems to be endless. I could have understood it if the S.W.S. tank had proved to be an incitement to crime, because it obviously solves the ancient problem of how to dispose of the body; but why people, in a civilised country, should want to find a watery grave for rollers and hearses—well, it is one of the many mysteries of this war, and I leave it at that.

Caviare to the General. I turn from this painful subject to something brighter—something, in fact, that you can eat. We all like to be favoured, even for a moment, with intimate glimpses of the lives of the great. It would be fascinating to know whether Shakespeare took porridge at breakfast, and whether Beethoven was partial to kippers; for that matter, it would be interesting to learn (though I think I can guess) what Mr. Churchill's reactions are to fillets of cod and soya sausages. How revealing, therefore, is it to learn from one of our omniscient newspapers that General Montgomery never eats bacon and eggs for breakfast, and, in fact, does not favour any form of bacon, pork or fish at all. Nay, more—*he does not eat toast!* "But," adds the Sergeant Cook who makes these edifying disclosures, "he is a great soldier to serve under." It is on record that the great Duke of Wellington "reduced himself to a skellington," but it is now known for the first time that great deeds can be done without the aid of eggs, bacon, pork, hake or toast. If we are ever tempted to complain of austerity, let this be an inspiration to us all.

Thou Shell of Death! The General's regimen is not mere asceticism; it shows that he is as good a dietitian as a strategist. I have just been reading an article which compensates me, in no small measure, for my eggless life. It now appears that there are subtle, lurking dangers in eggs, especially in the whites. A case is cited of a labouring man in U.S.A. who regularly ate six dozen raw eggs a week. Curiously enough, he did not thrive on them; his skin went all scaly. Scientific research discovered that the "avidin" in the egg-white conflicted with the "biotin," which appears to be a vitamin, rather far down in the vitamin alphabet. Now, avidin is a good thing in itself and biotin is a good thing in itself, but if the two



"Wake up, old man! It's time for you to take a rest now."

DRAWN BY SILENUS.

SALVAGE ALL YOUR OLD LETTERS—FOR VICTORY

get at cross-purposes, the result is a patient or even a corpse. It seems that the same thing may happen if you eat too much fish, despite that old wives' maxim that "fish is good for the brain." I suppose this is what is meant by a balanced diet; but, really, eating of any kind is becoming such a dangerous business that the only safe course appears to be prayer and fasting. These vitamins seem to behave as if the last thing which mattered to them was the human being who is their playground. And this avidin business is very hard on grandmothers, who are well known to spend most of their time sucking eggs.

Much in Little. This curious taste, which grandmothers share with weasels, does not appear to exist among our invasion troops. I find no raw eggs among their concentrated rations, but I find many other surprising things. Porridge, biscuits, stew, chocolate, tea in cubes ("like small pieces of Stilton cheese"), chocolate (vitaminised, of course), soup; and our American allies add little refinements like chopped pork, soluble coffee, cheese, lemon-juice powder and, of course, chewing-gum (with every meal, though I thought it was a perpetual meal in itself). All packed up in boxes or tins which will slip into the coat pocket! How far have we moved from the days of perennial Maconachie and plum-and-apple! I read even of self-heating soup; you just puncture the tin and light a fuse, and in two minutes the watched pot boils. Very convenient for shaving, I should think, in any droughty theatre of war. It is all very wonderful, but it prompts certain anxious surmises whether this is to be the diet of the future which science is going to prescribe for us.

Taking the Bun. The Tabloid Life in the Planned World—I can't say that it fills me with unadulterated comfort and joy. Let there be some cakes and ale too! Hitler has developed his blood-thirst on beans and raisins, but if anything could soften me towards him, it would be his well-known weakness for cream buns—until I reminded myself that that other merry little playboy, Rasputin, had the same taste in a high degree. However, it is an ill bun which blows nobody any good, for it is reported that the Führer's Bunmaker Extraordinary has, on the strength of his superlatively Nordic bakery, been appointed Under-Secretary in the Reich Ministry for Economic Affairs. We can always learn from our enemies, and I am not sure that in this matter Hitler does not show true statesmanship. A few practical and successful pastry-cooks might do much to brighten our own staffs of Economic Affairs, and their influence in the Ministry of Food would be invaluable.

What a Scream!

I presume that any German citizen who has the disloyalty to ask where the Herr Under-Secretary gets his cream from is liable to be for it as an Enemy on the Home Front. The Doktor now appears to think that the best way to deal with these snakes in the grass is to be funny at them. And it must be very painful for them. The Doktor's cross-talk comedians are Liese, the little ray of sunshine, and Miese, the grouser, whose name, I regret to state, means just plain lousy. Their sallies are irresistible — as thus: "*Liese*: Well, anyhow, we're safe from the bombs here in the country. *Miese*: That's all very well, but what about the eggs and bacon and milk? *Liese*: But don't you realise that the farmer has to give up all his products? Nothing is left over." Well, there is nothing like a good laugh to help the war effort, and doubtless the entire Reich is rocking with merriment over jokes like that. He is an irrepressible fellow, the Doktor, and it is difficult to see how anybody could be a Miese after being scored off like that.

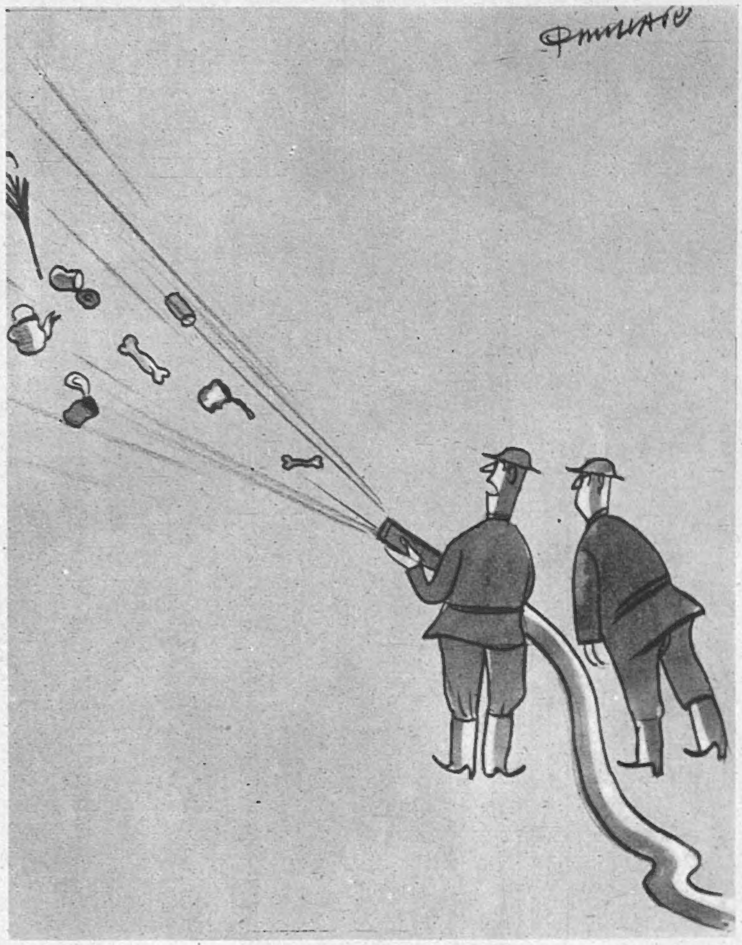
"My dear, she's *very* upset. She's to have some people billeted on her, and she's afraid one of them is her husband!"

DRAWN BY KENNETH BEAUCHAMP.

[Continued overleaf.

Continued.]

The Ilford Heroine. Nobody would describe as a Miese the ministering angel who came into such headline prominence recently by the unusual method of anonymity. Leslie is her name, and that is all we knew of her by her own will, except that she is a private in the A.T.S., and that she is a very good person to have about the place when pain and sorrow



" Time we cleared out that static water-tank, Joe . . ."

DRAWN BY P. MILLAR.

wring the brow. At all events, Florence Nightingale was a bad second to her in the opinion of many of the unlucky victims of the train smash at Ilford. She came, she saw and she conquered —and then she went, leaving behind patched limbs but broken hearts, and not even an address—

A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament !

This aversion, now so rare, from publicity does credit to Leslie's modesty, but of course she could not keep her name secret for long.

The Castaway. As she is evidently a lady of resource as well as kindness, I think Leslie might do something for the unfortunate swan who has interned himself—of all places—in Vincent Square, Westminster. When he and a few friends were winging south at the beginning of the winter, he developed engine trouble and made a forced landing, or watering, on the static water-tank in Vincent Square, thus making a picturesque contrast to the bedsteads and gas-stoves which had hitherto been its pride. After a few days of refuelling on bread-crusts and other nourishment provided by many lawless citizens in open defiance of the Emergency Regulations, motor-power was fully recovered ; but then arose the question of take-off. A 30-lb. swan needs a 50-yards runway to gain altitude, and that is more than any static water-tanks can be expected to afford. It looks as if a little jet propulsion is needed. Meanwhile, any swan-lover who proposes any other form of aid will have to fight out the question of priorities with the King's Swan Keeper, the police, the Home Office and Ministry of Home Security, the Westminster City Council and the Swan Masters of the Vintners' and Dyers' Companies. It is a complicated situation, and by the time it is settled I fear that the royal bird may have died of boredom or senile decay.

Pennies from Heaven. I wonder if anybody has founded a trust for refloating stranded swans ? It would not be surprising, for I seem to have been reading a lot lately about the ways of "eccentric" testators. Some of them don't seem to me to be as eccentric as they are thought to be. One of them, for example, made a note throughout his life of people who had shown him kindness or done him good turns, and left each of them a nice little sum by way of thanks. I cannot imagine a more sensible way of disposing of one's money, for at least this kind of gratitude escapes the suspicion of being "lively expectation of favours to come." Even more happy was the thought of the testator who left little surprise packets to those life-long friends whom we see every day and never know—the chap who sells us our daily paper, the bus conductor or the taxi-driver, the ticket-collector and the doorman and the office cleaner. These are good pals who are too often neglected, and it is time they came into their own. Pity being akin to love, this testator also left money to people whom he pitied—on one occasion to a young woman client "because she was fat and ugly." A kindly impulse —but I wonder whether the beneficiary entirely appreciated it ?

The Greeks Had a Word for It. That might make a good question for the Brains Trust—would you rather be fat, ugly and rich, or thin, glamorous and poor ? But I apologise for mentioning the Brains Trust ; it seems to be a controversial subject nowadays. Not only does it show a tendency to spontaneous combustion, but various persons are competing for the honour of having invented it, and, to judge by certain sections of the Press, the Second Front pales into insignificance beside this burning question. Without the least disparagement of any modern claimant, I suggest that the Brains Trust was invented a very long time ago. The first Question Master was one Socrates, and the producer was a certain Plato.

Man Not Overboard ! "After luncheon at the villa, the Prime Minister put on an enormous sombrero and led General de Gaulle by the arm towards the swimming-pool." But it 's all right ; there is no mention of any loud splash being heard, and the gallant General, I am happy to state, is reported to be in excellent health.

" Are you in a position to make a statement ? "

DRAWN BY CANE.

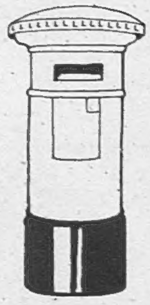
The eighty-second of our SERIES OF PLATES IN FULL COLOUR *published in this issue of "The Sketch" is by* DAVID WRIGHT.

"PLEASED TO MEET YOU. COO! WHAT A SMOKE-SCREEN!"

DRAWN BY FRANK REYNOLDS.

Please forward

By JOYCE DENNYS.



MY DEAR ROBERT—I have been to see Faith and little No-well. I found Faith sitting up in bed, looking even lovelier than usual, in a blue dressing-jacket, which matched her eyes. Beside her was a baby's cot positively frothing with white dimity and blue bows to match the bed-jacket, and where she got it all in wartime is a mystery.

"How lovely you look, Faith," I said, as I always do.

"What, this Old Rag?" said Faith, shaking out her swansdown sleeves. "I 've had it for years."

"I don't know how, but you somehow managed to look lovely all through what those books call 'The Difficult Months.'"

"Darling, you know perfectly well I looked like a barrage balloon."

"Well—balloon-ish. But lovely, too. May I look at little No-well?"

"Of course."

Faith drew the muslin aside and I approached on tiptoe. I had always known that Faith would manage to avoid the shame and distress of a red and wrinkled baby, but I was not prepared for the pink and white perfection I saw lying on a frilly pillow.

"Faith!"

"I approached on tiptoe."

Faith leant out of bed and gazed earnestly at her daughter. "Not a hint of the Conductor's nose, is there?" she said.

"Not a hint. Hardly a nose at all, really."

Faith leant back on her pillows with a happy sigh. "Of course, I adore the Conductor's nose," she said. "But it 's not the sort of thing you want to saddle your daughter with."

"I think she 's going to be one of those elegant little girls who look so nice in jodhpurs."

"Henrietta, I want you and Lady B to be Godmothers. Will you?"

"Oh, Faith, I 'd love it!"

"She 's going to be christened Carol Matilda."

"Whatever you christen her, she 'll always be called Little No-well."

"I know. The Conductor is resigned to it now. He 's crazy about her. When she cries, it makes him so unhappy he paces about in the road outside."

"The Conductor paces very easily," I said, remembering the night Little No-well was born. "Faith, I must go. There 's a W.V.S. Meeting."

"Darling, how awful for you," said Faith from her swansdown and muslin world.

"Good-bye, Little No-well," I said. The Baby gave a tiny sigh, uncurled the fingers of one hand, and curled them up again into a small pink shell.

The W.V.S. Meeting was very like the last W.V.S. Meeting, except that we all looked a little more shabby and tired than before. We were addressed by our County Organiser, who, I happen to know, dislikes speaking in public, but you 'd never guess it to listen to her. With terrific personal charm and humorous anecdote she put her stuff over, so that it was almost a pleasure to be told that we must prepare ourselves for an extremely unpleasant and arduous Spring, and a thing called a Butterfly Bomb.

"Any questions?" said the County Organiser, sitting down with a thankful sigh.

"What *is* a Butterfly Bomb?" I said.

The County Organiser covered her face with her hands, and everybody else groaned and turned round and looked at me.

"She 's very vague," said Mrs. Savernack, apologetically, "and she 's got a bad arm." Mrs. Savernack has become my champion and my friend since we discovered we had neuritis in common.

But it was made quite clear to me that the sooner I learnt about Butterfly Bombs the better, so I returned to the Hall at six o'clock that evening for another lecture on that very subject.

The lighting in our Hall is bad, and everybody waiting for the lecture to begin looked corpse-like. My feet were cold, and I was worrying about Charles's dinner, which was due to go into the oven at seven o'clock sharp. Then the lights were lowered, and a film was put on called "Disaster," which showed us fires, floods, earthquakes, road accidents, people falling off motor-bicycles, and crashing on skis. After this hardening process we saw another film which really was about Butterfly Bombs. Then we had a Talk about Butterfly Bombs and another German bomb, which seems to be able to do everything except play "Deutschland Uber Alles."

The Hall grew colder and colder, and stuffier and stuffier. I looked at my watch. It was nearly seven. I wanted to go home and light the oven and turn the Regulo to 6. I half-rose from my seat and sat down again. If I went out in the middle, people would think I was frightened.

But I was frightened. Everything had suddenly become hideous. Bomb—Bomb—Bomb—. The word kept falling with a thud into the cold, stuffy room, and people began asking questions in dull, flat tones. Bombs to kill people, maim them, blow off their arms and legs, blind them. Children——I thought of Little No-well sleeping so trustfully in her frilly cot. German children, too. What was it they called the tinfoil dropped by the R.A.F.? Angels' Hair. *Angels' Hair!* But one mustn't be sorry for German children. Devil's Spawn. One mustn't be sorry for anybody; one must be hard, and stern, and revengeful. But where were the beautiful and gracious things of life?

"What 's the matter with you, Henrietta?" said Lady B, as we shuffled out. "You look bright green."

"So do you," I said. "It 's the lights in this damned Hall."

"All the same, you still look green," said Lady B, as she helped me lay the table for Charles's dinner, which was now very late. "Have you got the Horrors?"

I nodded.

"I get them sometimes. Generally when I 'm tired It 's all right, really, you know."

"It isn't all right," I said angrily, but Lady B was looking in the *Radio Times*. "It 's the César Franck," she said, and pushed me gently into a chair.

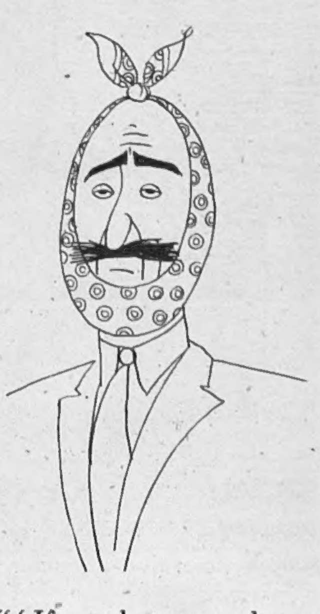
"Faith leant out of bed . . ."

"You see?" she said, as the last lovely notes of the slow movement died away. "The horror is just an excrescence. Like a boil on somebody's chin. You 'd never say the boil was more important than the person."

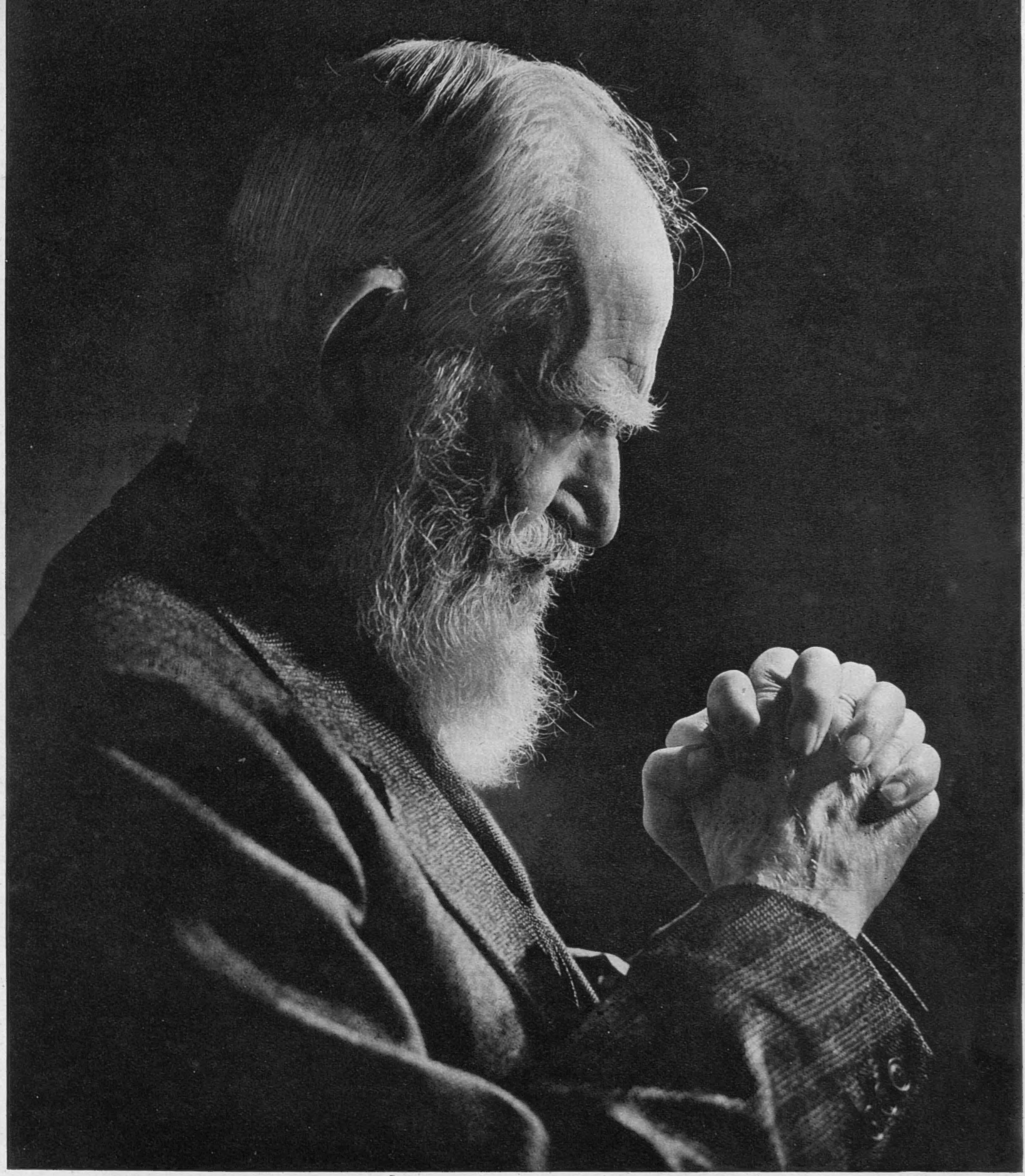
"If you happen to have a boil on your chin," said Charles, who had just come in, "that 's the way you feel about it. But they go off after a time."

"Like Butterfly Bombs," I said.

Always your affectionate
Childhood's Friend,
HENRIETTA.



"'If you happen to have a boil on your chin . . .'"



WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO—

SOCIALIST GEORGE BERNARD SHAW—for managing to give £20,000 a year to pay for a war which he tried to scotch, in spite of belonging to a profession "in which one lives precariously from hand to mouth."

In a red-hot, column-long letter to "The Times" of February 1, lifelong Socialist MR. SHAW, *with the imminence of an April Budget "which threatens so many of us with financial ruin . . ." looming over him, was moved to address an eloquent 1400-word appeal and much good advice to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Here are choice extracts from it: "Before the resumption of the war in 1939 I was a prosperous playwright, taxed on a scale that would have seemed mad to Gladstone or Queen Victoria, but within my taxable capacity. . . . To-day I am a Tax Collector for the Inland Revenue, compelled to act as such for a commission of 6d. in the pound." "My haunting dread is that some of my many admirers, by dying and leaving me a million or so, may consign me to an almshouse. As a man of letters I belong to a profession in which one lives precariously from hand to mouth . . . but since 1939 I have had to give to the Exchequer £20,000 a year to pay for a war which would not have occurred if my advice had been taken in 1919."*

PHOTOGRAPH BY KARSH OF OTTAWA.

CINEMA CAMEOS.

By C. A. LEJEUNE.

FOR the first half-hour of "JOHNNY VAGABOND" (London Pavilion) I had the feeling that I was watching what was going to be one of the ten best films of the year. When I came out at the end, I had sadly to admit that it was unlikely even to appear in my list of the best twenty. A film that had started off by being unusual, intimate and sensitive, seemed to have lost its way in a tangle of irrelevant details. "Johnny Vagabond" works out as just another comedy, better than many, but not nearly as good as its own promise, of small-town politics in our grandfathers' day.

The American title was "Johnny Come Lately," which might better be translated "Johnny Upstart," or "Johnny Newcomer." It is adapted from a short story of Louis Bromfield's called "MacLeod's Folly," and is the first independent production of the Cagney brothers—William, the producer, and James, the actor.

The film begins most delicately with a sketch of the home-life of an old lady, Mrs. Vinnie MacLeod, who has been for thirty years the editor of the *Plattsville Shield and Banner* ("A Shield for the Oppressed; a Banner for the Brave"). Mrs. MacLeod is a widow, with a pretty niece and a faithful coloured servant. She has inherited the paper from her husband. She adores it and lives for it. She pawns the family silver to finance it; and she is currently fighting a losing fight to preserve its independence against the Big Boss, a municipal racketeer.

Amongst the old lady's other oddities is a whim for helping vagrants. A couple of hobos are to be found most mornings eating hot cakes and maple syrup in her cellar. And it is quite natural that she should stop, on her way to the office, and talk to an unshaven young man whom she finds laughing over the "Pickwick Papers" by the town statue. When he is arrested for vagrancy, she pays his fine and takes him home with her. When she learns that he is a newspaper man, she gives him a job on her newspaper. That is natural too. All these early scenes, sensitively played by stage actress Grace George and film actor James Cagney, are beautifully natural. The young man, reluctantly receiving help, and the old lady, generously giving it, are sketched with a few slight, economic strokes and become real people. The newspaper man settles down in the newspaper woman's house, hears about her troubles, and sets out to take the fight for the *Shield and Banner* into his own hands. So far, so good.

And then what happens? Alas, I cannot tell you. Suddenly this good picture begins to go wild. The interest is shifted from the old lady, in whom anyone can believe, to an eccentric female called Gashouse Mary, in whom few can believe. This Gashouse Mary (Marjorie Main) is the proprietor of the local night-club, and apparently a key witness in the case against the Big Boss. Her arrival in the piece is the signal for considerable rowdiness, not to say slapstick. People start bashing people about, pushing them into gaol and hauling them out of gaol. There are shootings and fist-fights and general commotion. Miss Main literally lets down her hair, and is in the thick of everything. The Big Boss is defeated—rather too easily, some may feel—and retires in a half-hearted sort of way to Florida. Mrs. MacLeod gets the newspaper monopoly for Plattsville, and, one hopes, is enabled to reclaim her silver, while Johnny Vagabond hops a freight car and sets out again for the open road.

It is a pity that someone couldn't have pulled the Cagneys' picture together for them, for it has the makings of something special. Even in the wilder scenes there are nice touches, and whenever Miss George and Mr. Cagney get a bit of time together, the piece goes singingly. It may be imagination, but I have often fancied that the fault with these independent productions by stars is an excess of modesty. In their anxiety not to seem selfish, they are apt to rely too much on the extra help, and cut their own parts to a minimum. Leslie Howard used to do that. Now James Cagney is doing it. It is a mistake, I am certain. The public want to see as much as possible of these people. Otherwise they would never have become stars.

There is no excessive diffidence about "THOUSANDS CHEER," the big, glossy, Technicolor musical at the Empire. I didn't count the extras, so I can't tell you if thousands *actually* cheer, but the whole effect is one of crowds, and applause, and exuberance. Both the hero and heroine, it seems, are persons accustomed to be cheered. The heroine, Kathryn Jones (Kathryn Grayson—same Christian name—cute, see?) is a coloratura soprano, who sings with Jose Iturbi's orchestra. The hero, Eddie Marsh (Gene Kelly), is a circus performer on the high trapeze. They meet on a station platform, when Eddie is going for a soldier, and Kathryn is accompanying her father, the Colonel, to his training camp, to keep up the morale of the troops.

They fall in love after the first kiss, but since this occurs in the opening reel or thereabouts, and the film lasts for another two hours, something has to be done to keep the plot going. So the scriptwriters decide to undermine Eddie's morale. Eddie doesn't like the Army, it seems. He's an individualist. He resents discipline, and doesn't believe in teamwork.

This naturally breaks Kathryn's heart, just as it has broken ours in at least fifty-seven other films. It breaks the Colonel's heart, too, seeing one of his best privates feel that way. But the Colonel is a C.O. of resource. He puts the whole case, man-to-man, to Eddie's circus family, who have come to the camp to join him in an aerial show. And when Eddie climbs up on to the high trapeze, to do two-and-a-half somersaults in mid-air without the aid of a net, they whisper the most *awful* things to the poor young man. All about team-spirit, and what will happen if you don't co-operate when working in the traps. That gets him.

I forgot to tell you that Eddie and his trapeze are not the only attractions in the final camp show. Jose Iturbi, Kay Kyser and

THE BEST PLAYS.

*Starred by "The Sketch." ***=highest value.*

*** "BLITHE SPIRIT" (*Duchess*). Noel Coward's play. Betty Ann Davies, Cecil Parker, Irene Browne, Beryl Measor.

*** "PINK STRING AND SEALING WAX" (*Duke of York's*). 1880 Brighton comedy. Iris Hoey, Dorothy Hyson, David Horne.

** "THE DANCING YEARS" (*Adelphi*). Ivor Novello in his romantic musical play, with Muriel Barron and Roma Beaumont.

** "THE CRADLE SONG" (*Apollo*). John Gielgud's production of Spanish play. Wendy Hiller, Frederick Leister, Muriel Aked.

** "THE LISBON STORY" (*Hippodrome*). Play with music.

** "SOMETHING IN THE AIR" (*Palace*). Musical, with Jack Hulbert, Cicely Courtneidge.

** "ARC DE TRIOMPHE" (*Phœnix*). Ivor Novello's Paris cavalcade—1906-1925—with Mary Ellis, Raymond Lovell, Peter Graves, Elisabeth Welch.

** "PANAMA HATTIE" (*Piccadilly*). Musical comedy, with Bébé Daniels, Richard Hearne, Max Wall, Ivan Brandt, Claude Hulbert.

** "STRIKE A NEW NOTE" (*Prince of Wales*). George Black's revue, with the rising generation and Sid Field.

** "MY SISTER EILEEN" (*Savoy*). American slapstick with Sally Gray, Coral Browne, Max Bacon.

** "ARSENIC AND OLD LACE" (*Strand*). Witty, murderous farce. Lilian Braithwaite, Mary Jerrold, Naunton Wayne, Frank Pettingell, Edmund Willard.

** "WHILE THE SUN SHINES" (*Globe*). Rattigan's inter-allied complications without tears. Jane Baxter, Ronald Squire, Hugh McDermott.

** "JUNIOR MISS" (*Saville*). Comedy with the accent on youth. Joan White, Peggy Cummins.

** "HI-DE-HI" (*Stoll*). Hilarious revue, with Flanagan and Allen, Florence Desmond, Eddie Gray.

** "IT'S TIME TO DANCE" (*Lyric*). With Jack Buchanan, Fred Emney, Elsie Randolph.

** "THERE SHALL BE NO NIGHT" (*Aldwych*). Wonderful acting by the Lunts in Robert Sherwood play.

* "THE DRUID'S REST" (*St. Martin's Theatre*). Emlyn Williams's light comedy, with Gladys Henson, Michael Shepley.

* "AN IDEAL HUSBAND" (*Westminster*). Donat's ideal Wilde revival. Irene Vanbrugh, Martita Hunt, Esme Percy.

* "THIS TIME IT'S LOVE" (*Comedy*). Comedy from the French: George Desmond, Ellen Pollock, Charles Heslop, Beryl Mason.

* "SHE FOLLOWS ME ABOUT" (*Garrick*). Farce. Robertson Hare, Basil Radford, Catherine Lacey, Joyce Heron.

* "LOVE FOR LOVE" (*Haymarket*). Congreve comedy with John Gielgud, Yvonne Arnaud, Leslie Banks, Leon Quartermaine.

* "TEN LITTLE NIGGERS" (*St. James's*). Agatha Christie's thriller. Linden Travers, Allan Jeayes, Terence de Marney.

* "ACACIA AVENUE" (*Vaudeville*). Comedy. Gordon Harker, Hubert Gregg, Dorothy Hamilton, Megs Jenkins.

* "THE LOVE RACKET" (*Victoria Palace*). High-speed musical with Arthur Askey and Carol Raye.

* "HALFWAY TO HEAVEN" (*Princes*). Bobby Howes, Sydney Howard, Betty Stockfield, J. H. Roberts.

* "OLD CHELSEA" (*Winter Garden*). Revival. Richard Tauber, Maire O'Neill.

PANTOMIMES AND CHILDREN'S PLAYS.

"CINDERELLA" (*His Majesty's*). Evelyn Laye, Carole Lynne. "HUMPTY DUMPTY" (*London Coliseum*). Pat Kirkwood, Nervo and Knox, Naughton and Gold. "ALICE IN WONDERLAND" (*Scala*). Zena Dare, Dame Sybil Thorndike, Roma Beaumont.

N.B.—While we shall always do our best to keep this list up to date, we cannot hold ourselves responsible for any errors which may occur. Consult your daily paper; ring up the theatre to avoid disappointment.

Bob Crosby, each with Band, and a troop of musical stars from Hollywood, turn up too. That goes for Judy Garland, Mickey Rooney, Eleanor Powell, Red Skelton, Lena Horne, and a whole lot of other lucky people employed by the M.-G.-M. Studios.

Last week's première of "The Phantom of the Opera" (Odeon) was given in aid of Mrs. Churchill's Y.W.C.A. Wartime Fund. Erique Claudin (CLAUDE RAINS), *dismissed musician of the Paris Opera House, goes mad, and kills recklessly in his efforts to continue his payments for the singing education of Christine* (SUSANNA FOSTER). *Now a fugitive from the law, he haunts the Opera House masked, terrifying Christine.*

I have seen quite a lot of unfunny comedies in my time, but I seldom remember laughing less at a film that is intended to be one long scream than I did at "CRAZY HOUSE" (Leicester Square). Had I not been brought up a lady, I might indeed have made it the occasion for one long scream. For it occurred to me, watching the piece, that there comes a point at which unfunniness may take on an actual positive quality, making your scalp prickle and little bells jangle in your head. That point arrived for me very early in "Crazy House."

I am really sorry about this film, because I had hoped for an hour or so of good, irresponsible fun from it. "Crazy House," as you probably know, is Olsen and Johnson's successor to "Hellzapoppin," made on the same formula, with the same deliberate disregard of logic, tradition, continuity and plot. Both films are wacky, screwy, noisy, unrefined and altogether wild. But "Hellzapoppin" had one solid trait. It was primarily and exuberantly a film. It used film tricks and not stage tricks. It exploited the fun of camera and projector. It might seem as mad as one of those paintings in which the artist uses match-sticks, half-coconuts, tufts of hair and a coloured rag or two. But the madness had relevance. It was effective, because it was a craftsman's legitimate joke at the expense of his tools.

In "Crazy House," Olsen and Johnson seem to have forgotten that a film has to be a film before it can be a funny film. Their clowning here is all over the place. The idea of the piece—if you can call it an idea—is that the Boys are in Hollywood making a musical film. This gives them an excuse for bashing their way about the sets, for introducing irrelevant blondes in insubstantial numbers, for getting Allan Jones to step up and sing "The Donkey Serenade," and for hiring the services of Count Basie and his Band. It also gives an emphatic female comic named Cass Daley an opportunity to occur twice, once as herself and once as her stand-in.

JUDY GARLAND *croons "The Joint is Jumping" as guest star in a canteen scene from M.-G.-M.'s "Thousands Cheer" (Empire). Director: George Sidney. Producer: Joseph Pasternak.*

But the film, although it's all about a film, gives very little idea of the comic possibilities inherent in the film medium. There is no moment to touch the glorious, confused unspooling of celluloid in "Hellzapoppin." No one has thought of a scene to match the historic shadow-exit of Stinky Miller. No one plays with film *as* film; nor with the screen, as a screen; nor with the projector, as a fallible machine; nor very much with the camera, except for one or two straightforward bits of trickwork.

Taking refuge in a catacomb with Christine, whom he has kidnapped, Erique is shot at by Anatole (NELSON EDDY), *the girl's lover, and Raoul* (EDGAR BARRIER). *The catacomb caves in and the Phantom loses his life.*

"Crazy House" seems to me just a rather ill-considered variety bill transferred to the screen, with a standard of comedy and a style of performance that I find neither selective nor endearing. "Olsen and Johnson," a character in the film observes somewhere, "may be nuts, but they know how to put a show together." In that case, a study of "Crazy House" suggests that they were either thwarted or they didn't try.

Kathryn Jones (KATHRYN GRAYSON) *gives up a concert career to live at home with her father, and tries to effect a reconciliation between him and her mother* (MARY ASTOR). *This Technicolor picture, which is rich with stars, includes Jose Iturbi, Gene Kelly and John Boles, besides M.-G.-M.'s star parade, several fine orchestras and the M.-G.-M. dancing girls.*

A girl of eleven—and a very sensible girl, too, polite, grammatical, modest, and writing a beautiful prep-school roundhand—sends me a grave letter. She deplores the habit of local film managers of screening Westerns at special matinée shows for children. I think she is right. Westerns are too unsophisticated for children. Children don't need them. It is we grown-ups who need them. More and more, in these complicated days, I find my coevals sneaking into theatres that are showing cowboy films, drawing comfort from their simple functionalism, and deriving from these solid, unchanging stories of the wide open spaces a refreshment of mind that is as good as a week-end's holiday.

If you feel, as I so often do, that a good Western is just the thing to brace you up, I can recommend "IN OLD OKLAHOMA" (Regal). There are no frills and no nonsense about "In Old O." It relies, as a trade paper review so succinctly phrases it, on "well-tried narrative formula," "rip-roaring entertainment," "fistic sloshings" and "facile gun-work." The stars are John Wayne, Martha Scott and Albert Dekker, and the story is about a fight between the Good Ones and the Bad Ones for an oil-well concession. Will the Gusher gush in time for Mr. Wayne? Of course he will.

WEDDINGS, ENGAGEMENT, HEROES, AND PERSONALITIES

AMERICAN FLYING NURSES, who arrived in China by air, to serve with the American Army Air Force there, were welcomed by Chinese nurses, who admired their spaniel mascot.

CAPTAIN C. J. HANSON, D.C.L.I., son of Sir Charles Hanson, married MISS PATRICIA HELEN BRIND, W.R.N.S., daughter of Admiral Brind. The reception was held at Admiralty House. MR. A. V. ALEXANDER, the First Lord, is congratulating them.

Right: MR. T. L. ROWAN, a Private Secretary to Mr. Churchill, met THIRD OFFICER C. P. (JUDY) LOVE, W.R.N.S., when the Prime Minister visited Quebec last year. They were married last week.

MISS ANNE DRURY-LOWE, only daughter of the late Captain Laurence Drury-Lowe, and Mrs. Drury-Lowe, is engaged to Sir Francis Winnington, Bt., Welsh Guards, of Stanford Court, Worcestershire.

THE EARL OF HUNTINGDON married MISS MARGARET LANE, the well-known journalist and author, daughter of Mr. H. G. Lane, of Varnham Dean, Andover, at Paddington Registry Office.

When the DUCHESS OF KENT visited Warner Bros. Teddington Studios, MR. A. M. SALOMON presented her with a Spitfire model for the young Duke. It has been used in aerial sequences of films. (Left) LADY RACHEL DAVIDSON.

ROYALTY: NOTABLE AND NEWS-VALUE OF TO-DAY.

Whilst in the Middle East, DR. EDOUARD BENES, *President of Czechoslovakia, visited the* SHAH *and the* QUEEN OF PERSIA. *Her Majesty was Princess Fawzieh of Egypt.*

LIEUT.-COLONEL A. PEARSON, *Army Air Corps, attended Buckingham Palace to receive four decorations—the D.S.O. and two Bars, and the M.C. He is shown with* SECOND OFFICER C. MENZIES-ANDERSON, W.R.N.S.

MISS ELIZABETH COHEN, *born in 1922, is the younger daughter of Wing Commander L. Cohen, the sixty-eight-year-old winner of the D.F.C. She is a W.A.A.F. officer.*

MRS. LIONEL COHEN *(wife of Wing Commander L. Cohen, who has fought in four wars and is still going strong) works at the H.Q. of the W.V.S.*

MISS AILEEN COHEN *is the elder daughter of Wing Commander Cohen. She is Provost-Marshal, A.T.S., Scotland.*

WING COMMANDER L. COHEN, *aged sixty-eight, has added the D.F.C. for gallantry as an air gunner to his Army decorations, the D.S.O. and M.C. Air Liaison Officer to the Navy, he has forty-five operational flights to his credit.*

The marriage of SIR CUTHBERT DE HOGHTON, BT., *of Hoghton Tower, near Preston, to* MISS PHILOMENA SIMMONS *took place at Walton-le-Dale, Lancs. The bride was his secretary.*

PRINCESS ELIZABETH *and* PRINCESS MARGARET *recently visited the Yugoslav Exhibition at Burlington House. Queen Marie of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Ambassador showed them round.*

WIFE OF THE COMMANDER OF THE EIGHTH ARMY.

LADY LEESE *is the wife of Lieut.-General Sir Oliver Leese, Bt., C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., who in January was appointed to command the famous Eighth Army, in succession to General Sir Bernard Montgomery, the new C.-in-C., British Group of Armies under General Eisenhower. She is the only daughter of Major Cuthbert Leicester-Warren, of Tabley House, Knutsford, and was married in 1933. It was recently announced that Lady Leese is to be assistant director for the American Red Cross in Manchester.*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY HARLIP.

PLAYWRIGHT ON TOUR.

MR. NOEL COWARD'S *latest successes include his film of the Royal Navy, "In Which We Serve," the comedy "Blithe Spirit," which just can't stop running, and the broadcast which he delivered after his tour in North Africa and the Middle East. He was born in 1899, made his stage début in 1910; and there is no space to list his successes as actor, playwright, composer, film actor and producer. It was recently announced that he had reached Bulawayo on his way to Pretoria.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY KARSH OF OTTAWA.

MINISTERING ANGELS GO TO BATTLE SCHOOL:

"WALKIE-TALKIE" PRACTICE: *Nurse S. R. Rainey, of New York, learns to communicate with H.Q. by means of a portable wireless.*

CROSSING A RIVER BY EMERGENCY RAFT: *a party of U.S. nurses learn an important campaigning trick.*

THE AMERICAN ARMY NURSES' SCHOOL IN ENGLAND is the first institution of its kind to be set up either by the Americans or British in this country, or elsewhere. The American Army nurse does not work in the front line, but during her three weeks' course at the school she learns exactly how the Army functions, so that she may understand its routine and how it affects her. She must master the essentials of military law, emergency transport, identification of

[*Continued opposite.*

CAPTAIN SMITH, *Chief Lecturer, helps the nurses to plant their feet correctly on the ropes before starting on their journey across the stream.*

CROSSING A STREAM "THE HARD WAY" *and pull themselves across*

N.B. *A Coloured plate is inserted in this issue.*

TOUGHENING UP THE AMERICAN ARMY NURSES.

GETTING A STRETCHER CASE ACROSS A STREAM *by means of a crane and pulley, with a sandbag to keep the balance.*

A fine type of American Army nurse: SECOND LIEUT. LEONA HENRY, *of Crawford, Nebraska, wearing her helmet and slacks.*

quartette of nurses balance on a tight-rope other rope stretched overhead.

THIS NURSE VOLUNTEERED TO CROSS BY THE ONE-ROPE WAY: *it's tough and difficult, but she managed her trip without accident.*

Continued.]
armoured vehicles and aircraft—both friendly and enemy—and must be prepared to help in almost any direction in the case of grave emergency so as to give her patients the greatest protection. In fact, she is "toughened up" for battle and given the fullest training possible during her short course. As our photographs show, the young "ministering angels" take enthusiastically to the Commando-like exercises they are called upon to carry out.

SIGNORA TOSCANINI *walks in her New York garden with her son-in-law, the distinguished pianist,* VLADIMIR HOROWITZ, *and her daughter,* WANDA HOROWITZ.

MAESTRO AT HOME IN NEW YORK: ARTURO TOSCANINI.

SONIA HOROWITZ, *his little granddaughter, plays "Catch as catch can" with the maestro in the garden of their New York suburban home.*

ARTURO TOSCANINI *early began his musical career, and here he gives a piano lesson to the small* SONIA, *with* CARLA, *his wife, listening.*

The famous conductor rises at six every morning, and usually wakes everyone else in the house with his playing and singing. After a pause for breakfast, he works again until lunch-time.

SIGNOR *and* SIGNORA TOSCANINI *are devoted to their grandchild,* SONIA. *He sits in a rocking-chair with his family on the terrace of their Transatlantic home.*

WHEN the small and brilliant conductor, ARTURO TOSCANINI, stands before a symphony orchestra he is a "furious perfectionist" who makes men play music as they play it for no other man. Born at Parma, Italy, in March 1867, the maestro began studying music at the age of nine at the Parma Conservatory of Music. At nineteen he conducted a performance of "Aïda," at Rio de Janeiro, and from 1898-1908 was director of Europe's famous opera house, La Scala, at Milan. From 1908-15 he directed at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York; he went back to La Scala in 1921, in 1929 returning to the United States as regular conductor for the New York Symphony Society. When in 1922 he received the news of Mussolini's march on Rome, Toscanini denounced

[*Continued opposite.*

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the Duce, predicting his ruin of Italy. Some of Toscanini's finest triumphs have been achieved in Wagnerian music. He was guest conductor at the Festspielhaus of Bayreuth in 1930-31, but the tide of Nazi-ism against non-Aryan artists disgusted him, and he left Germany. Where Nazi-ism is concerned he has expressed himself with forthright bluntness many times, and his bâton has raised millions for the cause of freedom. He was delighted when the Italian armed forces surrendered to the Allies. Toscanini was the first conductor to wave musicians to their feet to share in the applause. Signora Toscanini was Carla de Martini before her marriage; they have one son and two daughters. The family has found a home in Riverdale, New York City.

NEWEST CHILD-STAR: PIGTAILED MARGARET O'BRIEN.

SIX-YEAR-OLD MARGARET O'BRIEN is a little girl with pigtails, large, solemn eyes and a snub nose. She is also an extremely gifted actress, the most remarkable child-star since Shirley Temple. She was first seen as an orphan of the London blitz in "Journey for Margaret," and since then has appeared as Alpha in "Lost Angel," recently presented at the Empire, and as Adéle, Jane's half-French pupil, in "Jane Eyre," which is running at the Odeon, Leicester Square. These stills show her in the three rôles. She is not a strikingly pretty child; and has no tricks, but she gives a notable and moving performance in each part.

Forlorn orphan of the London blitz: MARGARET O'BRIEN as the child heroine of "Journey for Margaret."

As Mr. Rochester's gay little ward, Adèle: MARGARET O'BRIEN in "Jane Eyre."

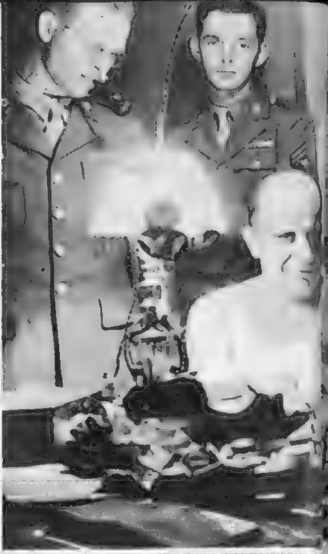
A moving sequence in "Journey for Margaret"; MARGARET O'BRIEN as the little British orphan.

Alpha, the wonder-child of "Lost Angel": MARGARET O'BRIEN as the infant prodigy who goes out to see the world.

Alpha, the six-year-old chess-player and scientist, makes fresh contacts in the world outside her institution. A still from "Lost Angel."

All the world loves a game of chance, the American no less than anyone else, so the PIN-TABLE HALL is always full up.

Just inside the entrance of Rainbow Corner SIGNPOST INDICATORS *to the various departments make things easy for visitors to find their way about.*



The MENDING DEPARTMENT *is*
WHITTAKER *is busy at work here*
LESTER LORAN, *of Rochester, New*

RAINBOW CORNER—THE LONDON AMERICAN RED CROSS CLUB.

The men get good meals at reasonable prices at the " RED " CAFETERIA. *The waitresses are all volunteers: (l. to r.) Miss Hildebrand, Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Rosner, and Mrs. McCarthy.*

In a RECREATION ROOM *gaily festooned with flags of the United Nations, some of the men play at the pin-tables, while others relax in comfortable armchairs.*

Below: BICYCLES *are loaned out from this counter. Here some of the men are being helped by charming assistants to choose trips for bicycle tours round London.*

Right: At the HOSPITALITY DEPARTMENT *you may arrange to spend furlough or a week-end in a country home, play golf, tennis, swim or fish, or fix up with a " date " to dance or see a film.*

deservedly popular. MRS. IRENE repairing the torn shirt of PFC. York, while others wait their turn.

On a huge map of the U.S.A. soldiers stick little flags with their names and addresses on, so that friends from their home town will know their whereabouts.

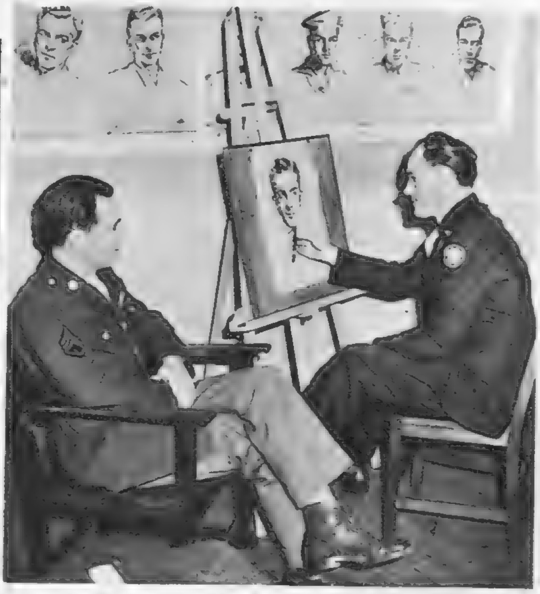
For one penny the JUKE BOX *plays your favourite gramophone record, which can be pre-selected by dialling the number. This instrument is found all over the States.*

In the PHOTOGRAPHIC SECTION *soldiers may have their portraits taken for inclusion in "V. Mail" (airgraphs to us).* PFC. FRANK DONATO, *of Brooklyn, New York, is posing for his portrait.*

RAINBOW CORNER is the most American place in London. A multitude of men of the U.S. Forces in Britain have been to this Club, lent rent free to the American Red Cross, and established by them as an entertainment centre for American troops and Allied troops introduced as guests,

[Continued below.

THE RAINBOW ROOM *is given over to dancing and snacks. On this occasion a girls' band is the attraction, and soldiers stand by in a solid block to listen to them.*



MR. HAROLD BOWLER, *a New York artist attached to the American Red Cross, sketches some of the men visiting the Club.*

ADÈLE ASTAIRE *(Lady Charles Cavendish) gives a free entertainment to American troops at the Rainbow, and don't they love it!*

Continued.]

on the lines of the celebrated free canteen in New York. Here you walk right into the American idiom at the front door—shoeshine, mending, shower-baths, newspapers, books are all to hand. Portraits are sketched, or you can be photographed. An art gallery, pin-tables, legal aid, and a cafeteria are other amenities of this all-American Club. Adèle Astaire is there, writing to the men's families, signing herself "Fred's sister." The atmosphere of Rainbow Corner is one of friendliness and gaiety, and guaranteed to blow away the blues from any lonely man.

Thousands of MESSAGES *are written on a large blackboard in a corner of the Information Bureau, calling soldiers on leave, soldiers to report to their units.*

" Final test O.K. ! " A Jap " ammunition dump " (plus black powder and smudge pots) goes up. The little objects on the shore represent native huts ; but the oil wells are real, not M.-G.-M. !

The experts are attaching a model 'plane to a thin black-paint wire, which will carry it over the water in an outdoor tank to th " Jap-held islands " built up against a huge canvas backgroun

A hitch—the model 'plane on its bombing mission sags because the wires are not sufficiently taut. The director waits on his raft, and the camera-man on his platform stands by.

TINY LITTLE PROPS MAKE HUGE-SCALE HAVOC SCENES !

THE poignant scenes of war havoc in the official films are, of course, the real thing, shots taken by units with the fighting forces, but i many other instances sequences of dramatic effect are obtained by the skilful use of tiny models, and miniature props. For example, thes photographs show the shooting of a scene for the M.-G.-M. film " A Guy Named Joe." An island landscape was built up in front of a canva backdrop beside an outdoor water-tank, and was successfully " bombed " and blown up. (The tiny model 'plane, which travelled on a black painted wire on its mission of destruction, will, when presented on the screen, look like a great war machine. M.-G.-M. scenery experts are no pretty thrifty and have given up the old-fashioned habit of building a three-dimensional house, car, train, or boat for every occasion. Now the only create just as much of anything as will do !

Andy Hardy's house on Ames Avenue—painted with trompe l'œil *meticulousness on a canvas backdrop. M.-G.-M. also has a three-dimensional exterior of Ames Avenue.*

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

By L. P. HARTLEY.

MAN, said Aristotle, is a political animal, and this is a fact that must be faced. Some poets—more especially lyric and religious poets—have ignored it and celebrated the relationship of man with God, or with himself, or with one other person; but the greatest, we have to admit, have included politics in their purview. Homer, Dante and Shakespeare were all inspired by political themes or themes with a political background.

Sir Osbert Sitwell is an intensely individual poet, but the emotions underlying his poetry are not so much personal and self-engendered as inspired by what he has observed outside him and pondered over. His mind is the pilot of his senses. Poetry for him is less a means of self-expression than a vehicle for imparting his vision of the world. His eye sees far and keenly (all his senses are on the alert), and when he sees he feels. Indeed, there are times when feeling comes first and suggests the nature of the thing seen, as in that wonderful poem appropriately entitled "The Vision." Here his preoccupation with the state of the world just before the war finds utterance in a dream-like prophecy whose slightly surrealist imagery is almost as haunting and hypnotic as that of "the Phœnix and the Turtle." "Prophecy," he says, "should always be at poetry's elbow," quickening the present with the threat or promise of the future; and "Selected Poems" contains many instances of that disturbing gift, from direct forecasts of this war, written during the last, to the ghostly premonitory terror of

> Is it Winter the Huntsman
> Who gallops through his iron glades,
> Cracking his cruel whip
> To the gathering shades?

"Brute Knowledge." In his preface, Sir Osbert discloses the intention behind one group of poems. "I tried to show . . . the reasons . . . of the plight in which we found ourselves . . . religion, intuition, even superstition had been banished from the modern world, and a worship of brute knowledge—science—and of material things had replaced them."

"Brute knowledge" is an unforgettable phrase. The knowledge which Sir Osbert opposes to it is both angelic and human, and sometimes, but not always, humane. We find here some of his best-known satires at the expense of comfortable onlookers of the last war. (The handful of poems about the present war are at once more despairing and more compassionate: "To Charlotte Corday" has a note of pleading, a flicker of tenderness, underlying its grim appeal.) Satire sears and cauterises, but does not help the wound to grow a new skin. What gives Sir Osbert's satire its authority is that he is ready with balm for the sore place. If he tells us what he dislikes and wishes away, he tells us, with equal persuasiveness and in greater detail, what he enjoys and would like to see kept. In his work the two moods, the creative and the destructive, are complementary, but it is the former which is the more in evidence. His sense of beauty shows at its most coloured and irresistible in glimpses of parrot-bright foreign countries such as "On the Coast of Coromandel"; but it is equally present, if more subdued, in the series of rustic portraits called "England Reclaimed." Here the northern landscape, "where the cold breathes close to the window-pane," is peopled by the figures of gardeners, gamekeepers, fishermen and their consorts, all described with the affectionate raillery, the delight in oddness, the lightning transitions into humour or pathos, the realism iridescent with fantasy that help to make this author's work so various yet so characteristically his.

A Distinguished War Novel. "Anger in the Sky" differs in plan from many other novels about the present war, chiefly in being longer and more comprehensive. Whereas most writers have been content to deal with only one aspect—say, a country-house with evacuee children, or the terror of the London air raids—Miss Susan Ertz combines them; and to make full measure she introduces several more issues, the relationship between ourselves and the Americans, between ourselves and the Vichy French; and there is even the suspicion of a spy-interest. The scene switches to America; we follow the progress of an Anglo-American romance and assist at heated altercations between Interventionists and Isolationists. So ambitious a scheme needs a large cast to carry it out. There are scores of characters, old and young, rich and poor, pleasant and unpleasant, and though most of them are to be found, at one time or another, under Mrs. Anstruther's hospitable roof at Meddenhall, the focal point of the book, and its most important symbol, many remain outside.

Points of View. But "Anger in the Sky" differs from much war fiction in being a novel of ideas, of dramatised points of view. It is made up of private conflicts within the general conflict. Sometimes these are straightforward differences of opinion on political questions. Madame Vibourg joins issue with everybody about France, even with her husband and her daughter; Viola and Tully, the American, quarrel almost at sight about the then American attitude to the war. For nearly everyone Miss Ertz uses the war as a touchstone of character; they tend to win her approval in proportion as they throw themselves heart and soul into it. But others have private conflicts outside the war; Mr. Grayson, the schoolmaster, is critical of the order of society; Norman Becker, the pessimist, despairs of the future of the human race; Viola wonders if she can ever replace a lost love with a new one. All these people are representative not only of different schools of thought, but also of different types of human being, but in almost every case they achieve individuality, chiefly because Miss Ertz has been endlessly resourceful in endowing each with a private drama, a clash between temperament and circumstance.

There are times when the mechanism of the story creaks a little—for instance, the device by which group after group is exhibited in an air raid and then dismissed before we know whether it will survive or not, wears thin. Moreover, the eventual drawing together of threads is rather a long business, and shows signs that Miss Ertz is arranging a compromise with the more wishful-thinking of her readers. And there are some dubious points of psychology. But these are small faults compared to the book's virtues—its insight, its sympathy, its sanity, its wisdom, its humour, and the mastery with which the author conducts her huge orchestra.

Portrait of "an Idiot." "Myra Carrol" is an intensive study of a woman's life and character, in which the war plays but a small part, though that part is decisive. We meet her at the age of forty-one, a wartime exile from London, sorting out from among her stored furniture items useful for the Government's evacuation scheme. The occupation gives her a plausible reason for examining her past life. The story might be described as a back-flash, continuous but for a few brief interruptions, disclosing a full-length portrait of "an idiot."

The term "idiot" (she uses it of herself) is really too harsh. Myra had made a mess of her life, true; but there were many extenuating circumstances upon which, not being prone to self-pity, she does not insist. Her well-to-do, gadabout parents had left her to be brought up in the country by a governess from whom she learnt much, but nothing about the outside world. When death deprived her of her shadowy parents, she was transferred to London, where a butterfly aunt, jealous of her beauty but anxious to exploit it, plunged her into raffish society. This regrettable existence was terminated, even more regrettably, by the violent death of her aunt and uncle. Emerging from the ensuing scandal, Myra married, without loving him, Andrew Carrol, the ineffectual but amiable heir to a peerage. His dominating mother took control of their married life. Myra obediently bore him three children, but she went her own way, and husband and wife drifted more and more apart. The nursery, which might have been a bond, became his province. Myra never had a real chance, and her much advertised beauty was the worst enemy of her happiness.

The Human Touch. At least two more catastrophes are needed to pull her story into its final shape; so that the plot seriously strains probability. All the more credit, therefore, to Miss Noel Streatfeild that she gives these unlikely happenings such an air of naturalness. Naturalness is one of her strong suits. Her people talk naturally, think naturally, and however grievously provoked by the blows of Fate, behave naturally; and her comments on them are inspired by an unfailing insight into human nature. The circumstances of the story may seem to lose touch with reality, but she never does. There is scarcely a dead or dull sentence in the book.

A Cruel Dilemma. The criticism to which many thrillers are liable—that they begin promisingly and end disappointingly—applies in some measure to "The Man Next Door." Only here the beginning is very promising indeed, and the end only a little disappointing. And in between there is some excellent characterisation and not a few of the shudders which M. G. Eberhart can always command. Christine Blake, for instance, at whose sufficiently elegant house in Washington the first murder is staged: how cleverly her relaxed, amiable vagueness is contrasted with the taut purposefulness of her lovely sister Angela! The book is a spy-story; and the central situation is original, in that Maida Lovell, Steven Blake's secretary, has to choose between giving valuable information to enemy agents and seeing her beloved employer indicted on a charge of murder. She has a fairly wholesome respect for danger, and the ruse that put her "on the spot" for the last time was one which nobody could have foreseen.

BOOKS REVIEWED.

Selected Poems. By Osbert Sitwell. (*Duckworth. 7s. 6d.*)
Anger in the Sky. By Susan Ertz. (*Hodder and Stoughton. 8s. 6d.*)
Myra Carrol. By Noel Streatfeild. (*Collins. 8s. 6d.*)
The Man Next Door. By M. G. Eberhart. (*Collins. 8s. 6d.*)

THE LONDON GALLERIES.

LEGER, 13, Old Bond Street.
Water-colour drawings: "Rowlandson Until the Present Day."

LEFEVRE, 1a, King Street, St. James's.
New paintings and drawings by Cecil Collins.

ROYAL ACADEMY, Burlington House.
Yugoslav Exhibition (closes February 13).

FINE ART SOCIETY, 148, New Bond Street.
Dürer, Rembrandt and some Modern Etchings.

REDFERN, 20, Cork Street.
Matthew Smith, Raoul Dufy, Lascaux, Ravilious paintings, collotypes, etc.

NATIONAL GALLERY, Trafalgar Square.
Paintings by Official War Artists. Selected Masterpiece.

ELLIS AND SMITH, 16b, Grafton Street, New Bond St.
George Stubbs, A.R.A., and other Sporting Paintings by Important Artists.

Czech patriots are familiar with violent death: a group including the bakeress Marie (KATINA PAXINOU), Paul Breda (ARTURO DE CORDOVA), and Milada (LUISE RAINER; right).

Breda, leader of the underground movement, with his fellow-patriots, Marie, the bakeress, who holds the meetings in her store-room, and Milada Preissinger, the rich young girl.

Gestapo chief Rheinhardt (PAUL LUKAS) questions Janoshik (WILLIAM BENDIX), the apparently half-witted cloakroom attendant, who is, in reality, the brains of the "underground."

CZECH UNDERGROUND: "HOSTAGES," WITH LUISE RAINER.

"HOSTAGES," due at the Plaza on Friday, February 11, is the Paramount picture version of Stefan Heym's best-seller; and has been chosen as the vehicle for Luise Rainer's return to the screen after an absence of four years. It is a poignant picture of the underground movement of resistance to the Germans in Czechoslovakia. The Gestapo round up a party of twenty-six hostages in reprisal for the "murder" of Lieut. Glasenapp, though they well know he committed suicide. Janoshik, brains of the underground party, escapes and carries out a big sabotage feat—blowing up German ammunition barges, but, with the exception of Milada and Paul Breda, the other hostages are lined up to face a German firing-squad.

LUISE RAINER, who returns to the screen in "Hostages" after an absence of four years. She plays the wealthy girl patriot, Milada, who works with Paul Breda.

The penalty for Czech patriotism: the hostages face the firing-squad. They were detained as a reprisal for a framed-up crime fastened on the Czechs by the Gestapo.

WILLIAM BENDIX as the intrepid Janoshik, the Czech underground chief, who pretends to be a half-wit and successfully slips through the German fingers to carry out a big bit of sabotage.

THE DIARY.*

By KAYE HUGHES.

"WELL, if you must go," Paul said; "only don't be long." And Clarice, who had got used to being her own mistress, firmly removed his hand from her shoulder to the back of the couch.

"If you can't amuse yourself for a few minutes on your own now——" she began to protest.

"Yes, I know what—where 's that book? Let 's have a look at that. You have kept it, haven't you? Don't you dare say you 've let it drop——" He was rummaging through her bureau, seizing now on the fat volume with an old-fashioned clasp and lock to it that took up all of one pigeon-hole.

"Oh, the diary!" exclaimed Clarice, a little less certainly.

"Where d' you keep the key?" her husband was asking, already rummaging impatiently for that too. And she reminded herself that, after all, the diary had been his gift, his idea; and in the first place there had been a sort of understanding that the day-to-day account of her existence was being undertaken largely for his benefit, a record of all the trivial happenings, the pleasurable and the sad, and the vexing things that it had seemed then almost impossible to believe soon they would not be sharing as usual. How sentimental they had been over that parting—almost as if subconsciously something had warned them that it was to be for an even longer period than the six months which had loomed so terribly before them in those pre-war days.

"And you must put down every time you think of me, and how often you miss me, and when you do anything or go anywhere that we 've done or been to together," Paul had said gravely. And neither of them had thought it in the least funny, because it had been rather hard that he should be sent off on this secret mission, which meant they might not be able even to write to each other for months at a time, so soon after their wedding.

They had made quite a ceremony of inscribing that opening paragraph towards the end of the first of the three years for which the diary provided. "To-day there are two of us to write—to-morrow I shall be alone, and I will begin to keep this record faithfully, and truthfully——"

Truthfully—there it was, the pledge given at the very start of her diary. Even if she hadn't come, in time, to regard the pages, so secure under lock and key, as her own personal and private property, oughtn't she still to have maintained a strict truthfulness, to have set down exactly and without dissimulation the thoughts and actions of her day? That the diary had ceased eventually to be a form of letter-writing, Clarice had realised; but then a correspondence to which there could be no reply over so drawn-out a period of time—her communication with Paul had consisted almost entirely of cables from widely-separated points on his mysterious journey—must inevitably have lapsed.

And then, of course, what neither of them had foreseen was Charles. And Charles had crept gradually into the diary as Dick, and Betty, and the couple in the flat above—all the people Paul knew, too—never did. At first he was little more than the name he would have been in a letter to Paul, who had never seen him. Then some anecdote or other bringing him in must be set on record, because it was so funny or so pleasing, or—as often happened—so typically Charles. Until at last everything she did, every decision she took, was influenced by Charles in some way or other. Even this suit, bought specially to wear when she went to meet Paul off the boat-train—hadn't she recorded Charles's reaction to that? she reminded herself. But how could one help it? The outfit was a bright cherry that made her fair hair almost golden, and his face had simply lit up that first time she had worn it, wondering if perhaps it wasn't a little too bright. So down it had gone, the frivolous entry—"Charles approves my new suit"—and she had forgotten to make any mention of the reason for this extravagance in wartime and with so much need—as Charles would have pointed out, given the opportunity—for saving.

"That 's a place to keep the key"—Paul was laughing over his shoulder at her now—"in the inkwell!"

For a minute it was on the tip of her tongue—"Oh, Paul, it 's dull—you won't find it a bit interesting"—only that wasn't the point. He would find it interesting, that portrait of Charles which, almost unconsciously, she had drawn in those pages; she hadn't the least doubt he would find that portrait vastly interesting, once he got over the shock of discovering himself supplanted there. And, after all, there *was* Charles—Charles who had almost completely monopolised her after those first, unbearably lonely months when Paul was gone—one couldn't get away from the fact of Charles, whose claims upon her were not going to cease suddenly because Paul was home, and it was as if time had stopped and they were back again in those first days of their marriage, madly and irresponsibly in love. Only it couldn't be quite like that again—the old, happy times they 'd had, absolutely carefree, the two of them absorbed in each other and thoroughly content. One couldn't always be like that, like children shut away in an imaginary world of their own. One had to grow up, one had to take one's place in the real world.

Clarice had gone over to the bureau, lingering by Paul still, and now instinctively she put her hand on the old-fashioned-looking book with its clasps. Men were so vain, she was thinking, and very plainly now Paul's words when he gave her the diary were coming back to her—"You 're to write about yourself, for me." And she had begun very well—all her thoughts and comments on each day's doings had reflected her longing for Paul, all her planning was in anticipation of his return, all her highest excitement was for that occasional cable or rarer letter.

And then—Charles. Filling her life more and more as the figure of Paul grew less distinct and their reunion further than ever away. "I wonder," Paul was saying now, "how many times you 've thought about me lately?"

"D' you really want to read it? The days are all more or less the same, you know. I often don't write it for days and then just jot down things I want to remember."

"Did you ever come to jot down a word of four letters beginning——"

"I know—with a P," Clarice interrupted, eluding his arms. And at the same time she took her hand off the diary.

One day, she said to herself, he may loom as large in Paul's life as he has already begun to do in mine. And at the sudden realisation her eyes were wondering, and her head full of imaginings, and her heart a little fearful. The figure of Charles sprang, tall and exciting and debonair, between her and the man holding the diary that was, even now, all about Charles, commonplace though the entries might be yet. She said, a little apologetically, "We haven't even known where you were these last months."

But as she went she saw him busy with the clasps, and turned back to say: "Why don't you walk round the garden? I 'll be out there very soon. You don't want to read all that"—trying to warn him, to prevent the inevitable shock to his vanity.

But Paul read wherever his finger flicked the pages open. . . . The day he had gone away—poor kid, how miserable she had been! And then the slow settling-down of loneliness—one could almost see it like a dull, befogging blur over her day-by-day writing. Then the group of blank pages whose significance escaped him. Then gradually the leap of that capital C growing more and more frequent out of the packed writing. Charles this, Charles that, conjectures about Charles, here and there a recorded fact about how he had looked, or what they had done.

The restless finger turned the pages back. . . . "Paul has been gone three weeks now." . . . "Perhaps Paul will come back now that it 's war." . . . "I lie awake trying not to imagine what may have happened to the mission." . . . And through it all, even underlying the excited account of news received, that accompaniment of loneliness. Until the dragging words halted altogether at those unwritten pages. And then Charles—the sentences gushed out again as if a new breath blew through the writer. Thank goodness for Charles! thought Paul; and he wanted Clarice back with him again, this moment, to make up to her for all those first lonely months.

"Clarice! Darling, where are you?" he called up the passage.

"I 'm just going into the garden," the reply came back. "I 'm busy for a minute." He went to the French window and waited to see her come out. And still he smiled, reading: "I told Charles about Paul coming home—he seemed to understand."

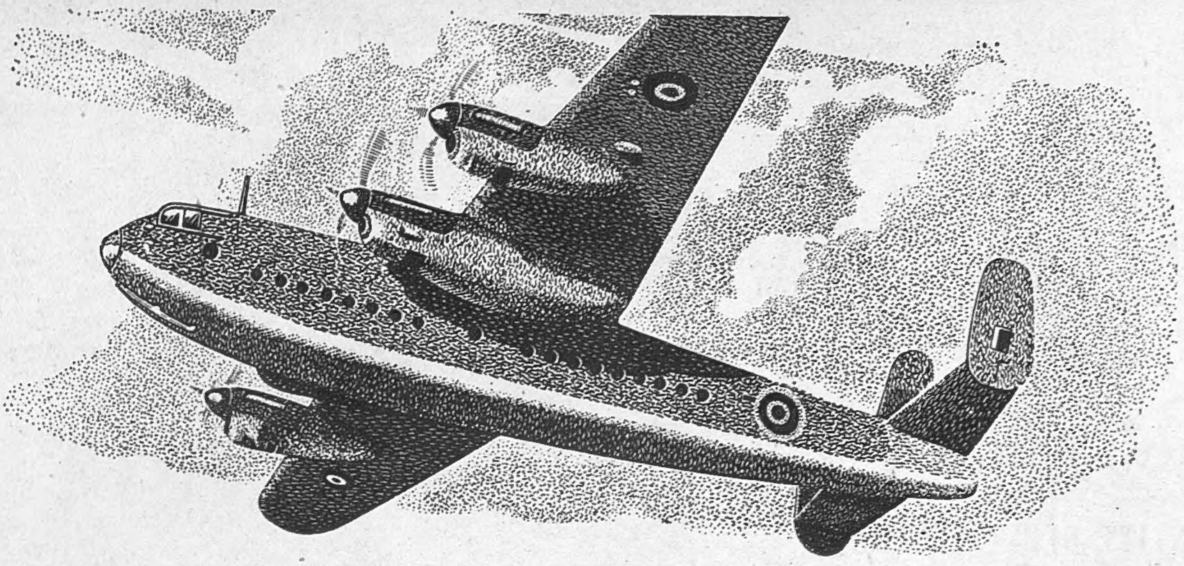
That was the last entry. So he turned to the pages left for memorandum at the end of each year. Now at last surprise took him. He dashed on to the lawn just as Clarice leant over the pram pushed under the shade of an apple-tree.

"Wait a minute!" he said, in a voice that made her put a finger to her lips. "Has he really got a tooth?"

Clarice, in spite of her splashed frock and the lock of hair that looked as if small hands had been playing with it, managed a grown-up look. "Of course," she said. "Charles has two."

THE END.

**All the characters and incidents in this story are imaginary.*



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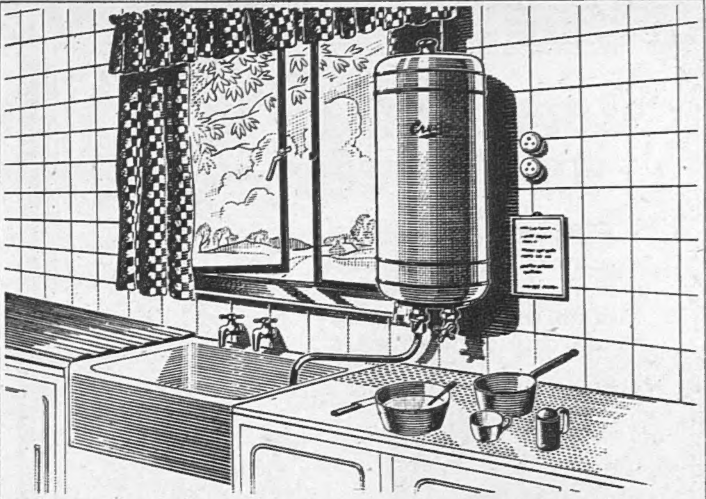

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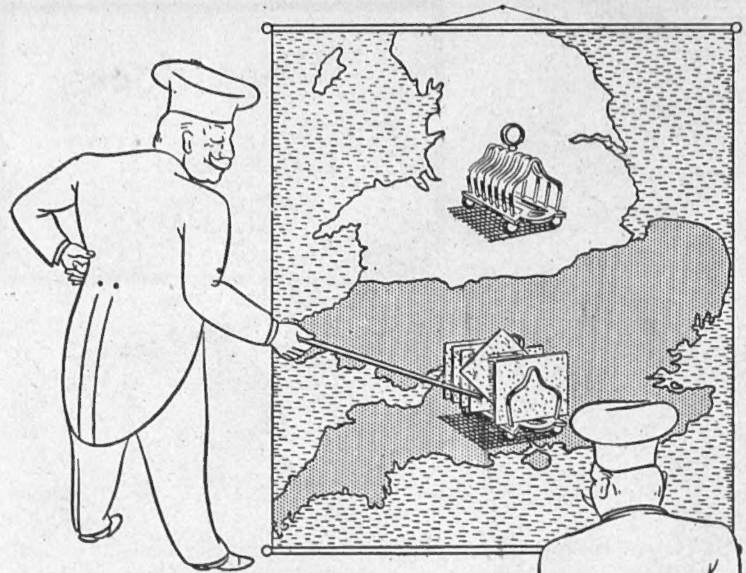

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